

APPENDIX “O”



MORTUARY MANAGEMENT AND THE DISPOSTION OF DEAD HUMAN BODIES

**DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY**

Table of Contents

I.	AUTHORITY	O-1
II.	PURPOSE.....	O-1
III.	EXPLANATION OF TERMS.....	O-1
IV.	SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS.....	O-2
V.	CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS.....	O-3
VI.	RESPONSIBILITIES.....	O-5
VII.	DIRECTION AND CONTROL.....	O-5
VIII.	RESPONSE LEVELS/ACTION GUIDES.....	O-5
IX.	ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT.....	O-6
X.	DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE.....	O-6
XI.	TEXAS DISASTER DISTRICTS	O-7

DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY

APPENDIX "O"

MORTUARY MANAGEMENT AND THE DISPOSITION OF DEAD HUMAN BODIES

I. AUTHORITY

A. State

1. See Basic Plan, Section I.
2. CCP, Part 1, Chapter 49, Inquests on Dead Bodies
3. Texas Occupations Code 651
4. TAC, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 181, Subchapter B, Rule 181.33
5. TAC, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 181, Subchapter A, Rules 181.1 through 181.6 and 181.14
6. Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 10, Chapter 203, Rule 203.36, Temporary Operation Authorization—Damaged Establishments

II. PURPOSE

To assist local communities plan for the disposition of dead human bodies during a disaster or mass fatality situation, when the number of dead bodies exceeds the capability of local mortuary services, supplies, and resources.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

A. Acronyms

CCP	Code of Criminal Procedure
DMORT	Disaster Mortuary Service Team
DPS	Department of Public Safety
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
TFSC	Texas Funeral Service Commission
JP	Justice of the Peace
ME	Medical Examiner
RLO	Regional Liaison Officer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SMAT	State Mortuary Assistance Team
TAC	Texas Administrative Code

DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY

B. Definitions

DISCUSSION OF
NEW PURPOSES

1. Disaster Mortuary Services Team. A team of mortuary service and medical personnel that provide mortuary and victim identification services following major or catastrophic disasters.
2. Dead Body. A lifeless human body or such parts of the human body or the bones thereof from the state of which it may be reasonably concluded that death occurred.
3. State Mortuary Assistance Team. A team of volunteers, professionals, and support personnel that will identify and dispose of a dead human body with dignity and respect.

IV. SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. The state of Texas has periodically experienced disasters that were severe enough that local resources were insufficient to meet response and recovery needs.
2. The state of Texas must not plan for assistance from the federal government.
3. The state agencies of Texas and local communities within the state must be able to independently provide the support, supplies, equipment, and services required.

B. Assumptions

1. Texas is vulnerable to hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, hazardous materials incidents, transportation accidents, acts of terrorism, and a number of other natural and manmade hazards.

Any of these hazards could result in multiple death response requirements that could overwhelm local capabilities.

2. The local mortuary assistance team members will be available to assist in the response, recovery, evacuation, identification, death registration, notification of next of kin, collection of personal effects, counseling, sanitation, and to release remains in accordance with governing statutes.
3. Catastrophic emergency situations may affect a large proportion of Texas cities and counties making it difficult to obtain aid and support.

4. There are considerable risks when treating or handling human remains. They should be handled as contagious and/or contaminated. Universal precautions should be taken by both medical and mortuary personnel.
5. Immunizations before, during, and after a disaster are required for mortuary service personnel and all of those coming into contact with human remains.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY

A. General

1. This appendix is designed to assist local communities in planning for the disposition of human remains during a mass fatality, see Attachment 1. A mass fatality may be the result of a catastrophic incident or a pandemic disease where the number of dead exceeds the capability of local mortuary services, supplies, equipment, and resources.

B. Mortuary Services

1. The Governor will direct deployment of the State Mortuary Assistance Team (SMAT) in coordination with the Commissioner of Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Chief of the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM). Following directions to deploy, the SMAT will be assisted with coordination requirements by the Executive Director of the Texas Funeral Service Commission (TFSC) and staff at the State Operations Center (SOC) or alternative location. Once activation of the SMAT has been approved, the Executive Director of the TFSC will alert the SMAT members and coordinators to assemble at the SOC or alternate site. SMAT members will notify funeral industry volunteers for assistance. A written log will be kept of all activities initiated, time, date, and responsible person or organization point of contact. Site selection will be determined by the SMAT in coordination with the Commissioner, DSHS, and nearest Medical Examiner (ME) location. SMAT will coordinate with the nearest regional Department of Public Safety (DPS) or Regional Liaison Officer, and will direct the establishment of the mortuary (morgue) location. DSHS will direct the disposition of dead human bodies and their identification.
2. Justices of the Peace or Medical Examiners are responsible for investigating deaths that are not due to natural causes or do not occur in the presence of an attending physician. They are responsible for determining the cause of death. They are also responsible for authorizing or requiring autopsies to determine the cause of death, forensic investigations to identify unidentified bodies, and removal of bodies from incident sites.

3. When it appears that an incident involves fatalities, local authorities shall request and make notifications to the Justice of the Peace/Medical Examiner and law enforcement and request they respond to the scene.
4. Local law enforcement or the Justice of the Peace or Medical Examiner will arrange for the transportation of bodies requiring autopsies or identification to morgues or suitable examination facilities. When mass fatalities have occurred, it may be necessary to establish temporary morgues and holding facilities and obtain additional mortuary service assistance.
5. Funeral industry personnel and trained volunteers will collect bodies of victims from the scene, hospitals, morgues, and other locations and make arrangements with next of kin for the disposition of remains.
6. The SMAT will coordinate with funeral industry and death care suppliers throughout the state of Texas for supplies and equipment first before requesting assistance outside of the state of Texas. Any request for federal assistance may be approved by the Governor.
7. The SMAT will assist local death care providers to coordinate with clergy and religious organizations.
8. Requests for food and water, as well as oil and gasoline, and transport services will be requested by the SMAT in coordination with the Regional Liaison Office.
9. The SMAT at a fixed location will have the capability of providing the following services when needed:
 - a. Body Processing Identification
 - b. Autopsy Room(s)
 - c. Embalming Preparation Room(s)
 - d. Casketing Rooms(s)
 - e. Dental and Dental X-Ray Room(s)
 - f. X-Ray Room(s)
 - g. Public Reception Area Room
 - h. Personnel Security Section Room
 - i. Clergy Room(s)
 - j. Storage Room Space and Supply Area
 - k. Break Area
 - l. SMAT HQ Area and Office Space
 - m. Transportation Section
 - n. Refrigeration Section

DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY

10. The SMAT is to be located, when possible, to the nearest Medical Examiner's office and DPS RLO district location(s). It is imperative that coordination be made with the district RLO and DSHS local representative.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. State Mortuary Assistance Team (SMAT) and Mortuary Services

1. Provide for the collection and care of human remains until final disposition.
2. Establish temporary holding facilities and morgue sites, if required.
3. Coordinate as necessary with local emergency health and medical services.
4. Local community disaster planning.

VII. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. Routine

The Executive Director of the Texas Funeral Service Commission or designated representative will be the coordinator for SMAT operations in coordination with the DSHS representative.

B. Response

When requested the SMAT coordinator will provide direction and control of SMAT members.

C. Recovery

In coordination with the DSHS the SMAT coordinator assigns responsibilities for SMAT members as well as status report requirements. The SMAT coordinator will be responsible for providing strategy and guidance of the team members and direction for collection of information required of SMAT members.

VIII. RESPONSE LEVELS/ACTION GUIDES

See basic plan, Section VII, for a list of the different emergency response levels and the kind of activities that characterize each level.

**DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY**

IX. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

A. Support

All agreements and memoranda of understanding entered into for the purchase, lease or otherwise use of goods, supplies, equipment, and services will be in accordance with state law and established policies and procedures. After a declaration of a state disaster by the Governor, selected rules and regulations that affect recovery support may be suspended. The specific impact will be determined by the SMAT coordinator in conjunction with the DSHS. SMAT members will be advised accordingly.

B. Status Reports

Daily status reports will be kept by the SMAT coordinator or designated representative in accordance with applicable state operating policies and procedures.

C. Critiques/After Action Reports and Reviews

Following the conclusion of any significant emergency event, incident or exercise the SMAT coordinator will conduct a critique and after action report of group activities, during the event, incident, or exercise. SMAT members will provide written and oral inputs for this critique and after action review. The SMAT coordinator will consolidate all information submitted into a final written report and submit it to the Commissioner of State Health Service or designated representative.

X. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A. The Commissioner, DSHS, is the approving authority for this appendix and is responsible for its implementation in coordination with the Executive Director, Texas Funeral Service Commission or designated representative of the Texas Funeral Service Commission.

B. The Executive Director or designated representative of the Texas Funeral Service Commission is responsible for the development, maintenance, revisions, and distributions of this appendix in conjunction with the Governor's Division of Emergency Management and Commissioner, DSHS.

**DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY**

District 4A-Ector
 District Sub 1A-Denton,
 Collin, Tarrant
 District Sub 5A-Parker
 District 1A-Dallas
 District 6A-Johnson
 District 6B-Travis
 District 2A-Harris,
 Galveston
 District 3A-Nueces
 District 3B-Bexar

Texas Disaster Districts

RLO's	DISTRICTS	HQ	Spvar	RLO's #
Jim Badgett	1A	Garland	Brock	214-861-2380
Bill Campbell	Sub 1A	Hurst	Brock	817-299-1312
Deborah Donahue	1B	Tyler	Brock	903-939-6032
Vacant	2A	Houston	Harmon	281-517-1353
Dennis Guffey	S2A	Texas City	Harmon	409-938-7899
AJ Guarino	2C	Conroe	Harmon	936-442-2868
Vacant	Sub 2C	Pierce	Harmon	979-543-6878
Vacant	2B	Beaumont	Harmon	409-824-5427
Kari Tatro	Sub 2B	Lufkin	Harmon	936-634-4638
Randy Sijansky	3A	Corpus Christi	Harmon	361-698-5850
Steve Gladstone	3B	San Antonio	Harmon	210-531-4325
Dude Speed	4A	Midland	Brock	432-498-2175
Ray Resendez	Sub 4A	El Paso	Brock	915-849-4005
Mark Shipman	4B	Ablene	Brock	325-795-4029
Teresa Borcik	Sub 4B	San Angelo	Brock	915-223-6555
Georgia Lucero	5A	Lubbock	Brock	806-472-2712
Steve Reddish	Sub 5A	Wichita Falls	Brock	940-551-5588
David Solis	5B	Amarillo	Brock	806-468-1414
Dennis Baker	6A	Waco	Brock	254-759-7165
David Leback	6B	Austin	Brock	512-997-4117
Doug Crabtree	6C	Bryan	Brock	979-776-3187
Alex Camacho	8A	McAllen	Harmon	956-984-5656
Vacant	Sub 8A	Laredo	Harmon	956-728-2200

Phases of the Pandemic Period

I. Interpandemic Period

1&2- No new virus subtypes identified. "Novel virus" identified in birds or animals. Transmission to humans has not occurred.

- A. Review pertinent sections of local emergency plan; develop memoranda of understanding with appropriate partners, serve as a consultant around mass fatalities, attend local meetings on the topic.**
- A. Contact local vital statistics representatives for forms required. Determine local funeral home coordination and capability for disposing of dead human bodies. Determine site selection for temporary morgues as well as primary and alternative routes of transportation. Suggested locations can include warehouses, gymnasiums, vacated buildings, large garages, etc.**
- B. Obtain immunizations at the earliest possible date. Immunize first responders including funeral industry personnel, police and fire officials, water and electric personnel, and personnel with the most contact with the public.**
- C. Educate the public, via forums, media, civic and religious groups regarding the quadrant system and the role of SMAT.**
- D. Determine the different religions in your area and establish contacts with local clergy associations. Find out religious preferences for disposition of dead human bodies.**
- E. Consider where local refrigeration may be used to store dead bodies including truck refrigeration or refrigerated warehouses, or cold storage.**
- F. Establish contacts with local county officials, police, fire representatives, and disaster coordinator(s)/planner(s).**
- G. Include all medical care providers, dental care personnel, nursing home representatives, and insurance representatives in your forums.**
- H. Conduct field training exercise(s).**
- I. Determine processes to identify dead bodies, either by number, alphabet, or alpha-numeric designation.**

- J. Notify cemetery and crematory owners and personnel.

II. Pandemic Period

A. Phases 3 & 4 Transmission to humans from birds has occurred but no human-to-human spread. † Small clusters of human-to-human spread.

1. Determine necessity for activating Texas Identification and International North America Identification.
2. Inventory personal protective equipment, embalming supplies and fluids, body bags, and caskets.
3. Determine funding sources for burial and cremations.
4. Order identification bracelets and identification tags.
5. Finalize points of contact with telephone numbers and emails for those that will deliver supplies and equipment. Provide them with an alternate point of contact at your location.
6. Finalize transport requirements for dead human remains and contact the transportation representative.
7. Finalize Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local community for SMAT site.
8. Place SMAT representatives on call for deployment.
9. Activate on-call list for SMAT personnel and industry volunteers.
10. Identify which mortuaries will be used; or, if temporary morgue(s) will be used, establish morgue location(s).
11. Establish supplies and re-supply points.
12. Identify transportation routes and alternate routes and quadrant locations.
13. Coordinate and finalize communications with ME and JP.
14. Establish communication links with state and local points of contact.

B. Phase 5 – Larger but still localized clusters of human spread suggesting that virus is better adapting to humans but may not be fully transmissible.

- a. Determine necessity for activating Texas Identification and North America Identification.
- b. Activate SMAT to fully operational status.
- c. Notify owner of facility of its use per Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- 4. For Texas identification move supplies.

C. Pandemic / Phase 6 - Increased and sustained transmission to humans. Indications of spread across countries.

- 1. Continue operations.

III. Subsidized Period.

- A. Complete tasks remaining from last wave and prepare for the next wave.
- B. Review previous phases.
- C. Review performance and make adjustments.
- D. Replenish supplies.

IV. Post-pandemic Period.

- A. Evaluate and write after action reports.
- B. Submit financial report and request reimbursement.

V. End of pandemic and return to Interpandemic period.

**DISCUSSION DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY**